



# CITY OF SANTA BARBARA

## COUNCIL AGENDA REPORT

**AGENDA DATE:** July 19, 2005

**TO:** Mayor and Councilmembers

**FROM:** Engineering Division/Public Works Department

**SUBJECT:** Lower Mission Creek Project Update and Design Subcommittee Appointment

**RECOMMENDATIONS:** That Council:

- A. Hear a Status Update on Lower Mission Creek; and
- B. Appoint a Councilmember liaison to the Lower Mission Creek Design Subcommittee.

### **DISCUSSION:**

#### **PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

The Lower Mission Creek Flood Control (LMC) Project is proposed by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps) in coordination with the Santa Barbara County Flood Control District (County), who is the lead local sponsor. The project is planned to increase flood protection along Mission Creek between Canon Perdido Street and Cabrillo Boulevard from an estimated 8-year event to a 20-year flooding event. The project also provides significant rehabilitation of the creek. As a local sponsor, the County is responsible for 50% of the project costs. Currently, by agreement with the County, the City of Santa Barbara (City) pays for 25% of the County's costs. Thus, the City pays for 12.5% of total project costs. City staff (staff) time, and some professional service costs, are not included in this accounting. The current estimate of the total project cost is \$28.5 million.

The Lower Mission Creek Design Subcommittee (Subcommittee) was created several years ago to provide input from the City's discretionary review committees through the Environmental Review process. The Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Impact Statement (EIR/EIS) was completed in 2000 and subsequently approved. After the Corps obtained funding to initiate the design, the Subcommittee began to meet again. Unfortunately, since the Corps has had little recent funding, the Subcommittee has rarely met of late.

REVIEWED BY:

\_\_\_\_\_ Finance

\_\_\_\_\_ Attorney

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## CURRENT STATUS

Last year, the Corps anticipated that the project design would be completed by this summer. However, the Corps did not receive the required funding in this year's Federal Budget. The start of design has been delayed until funds are allocated. Since the \$1.2 million required to complete design is not included in next Fiscal Year's Federal budget, the Corps is uncertain at this time when they will be able to finish the design.

Although the final design has been delayed, City and County staff continue to push forward with the requirements of the Conditions for the Coastal Consistency Determination (CCD) from the California Coastal Commission (CCC). Staff has been pursuing Biology, Geomorphology, Engineering professional services, and the Corps for the completion of the four key CCC conditions, as listed below, with the expectation of having a submittal to the CCC by the end of the summer. A brief synopsis of the existing status of all four CCD conditions is as follows:

### *TIDEWATER GOBY*

- The genetic study (conducted by Dr. David Jacobs of UCLA, Dr. Scott Cooper of UCSB, and Kevin Lafferty of UCSB) is near final completion with the draft report currently in review.
- The Goby Management Plan, incorporating findings of the genetic study, is waiting for the completion of the genetic study.

### *PILOT CHANNEL*

- The study of the creek's annual pilot (low flow) channel has been completed and reviewed by local environmental interests and professionals as required by the CCC. The final study is scheduled to be sanctioned at a near-future meeting with UCSB professors (Dr. Ed Keller and Dr. Scott Cooper) and local environmental interests.
- Staff's intention is to try and incorporate suggestions from a Corps' Value Engineering study. Plus, under the existing contract, staff will use a local engineering firm to help the Corps with drawing up plans to demonstrate the most recent final design developments.

### *ADAPTIVE MANAGEMENT PLAN*

- This plan has been completed by the County, and has received the Corps' final approval. This work is being wrapped into the Pilot Channel Study.

### *PRIVATE LANDSCAPING PROGRAM*

- It is staff's intent that once the first three key conditions are met, and submittal to the CCC is scheduled, the Public Works Department will initiate a riparian/native nursery and planting program in coordination with other existing similar programs run by the Airport Department and the Parks and Recreation Department's Creeks Division.

Staff intends to have all these issues wrapped up and submitted to the CCC by the end of the summer, subject to appropriate support from the Corps and other review participants. With a positive determination from the CCC in hand, it is staff's expectation that the City and County can aggressively pursue Federal design and construction funding in the next Federal Budget in Fiscal Year 2007.

In the meantime, separate from the LMC Project, the City is moving forward with the previously planned bridge replacement projects on Mission Creek for the Haley/De La Vina Bridge and the Ortega Street Bridge. The Haley/De La Vina Bridge is currently in final design, while the Ortega Street Bridge should have a design contract awarded in the next couple of months. Each of these projects will include constructing limited localized elements of the LMC Project. In addition, even though the Cabrillo Boulevard Bridge is not within the project area limits (the project starts at the upstream edge of the bridge), efforts are underway to replace that bridge as well (due to structural issues). Construction elements of the LMC Project between Cabrillo Street and State Street are anticipated to be completed in coordination with the County.

#### DESIGN SUBCOMMITTEE

A meeting for the Subcommittee has not been scheduled recently due to a lack of progress in design. However, they have been kept informed as to the developments of the project via written correspondence. Staff expects more meetings will be scheduled in the months to come as the LMC Project CCD conditions are resolved, along with the bridge replacement projects necessitating their involvement. Therefore, staff is requesting that Council nominate a new councilmember liaison to participate in future meetings (expected to commence tentatively on July 29, 2005). Meetings are scheduled quarterly with a time requirement of about 2 hours per meeting.

Currently, the Subcommittee consists of Phil Suding and Fermina Murray of the Historic Landmarks Commission; Christine Pierron, Bruce Bartlett, and Christopher Manson-Hing of the Architectural Board of Review; Bendy White and George Myers of the Planning Commission; Beebe Longstreet of the Parks and Recreation Commission; and David Pritchett of the Creeks Advisory Committee.

The Subcommittee meetings will be conducted according to the Brown Act. Staff will notify the public of the meetings and welcome public participation.

The continued participation of the Subcommittee is very important to the success of the project, which is a creek rehabilitation project, as well as a flood control project.

**PREPARED BY:** Pat Kelly, Assistant Public Works Director/City Engineer/KSR/klg

**SUBMITTED BY:** Anthony J. Nisich, Public Works Director

**APPROVED BY:** City Administrator's Office